

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for automated preparation of radio-frequency devices for
2 distribution, the method comprising:
3 receiving a plurality of such radio-frequency devices, each such device
4 comprising an embedded radio-frequency transponder;
5 sequentially moving each of the radio-frequency devices to a plurality of
6 stations of a preparation device;
7 encoding, at a first station, a radio-frequency identification code assigned to
8 the each of the radio-frequency devices;
9 identifying a recipient for the each of the radio-frequency devices; and
10 labeling, at a second station, a package containing the each of the radio-
11 frequency devices with a mailing address for the recipient.

1 2. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising:
2 reading, at a third station, the radio-frequency identification code from the
3 each of the radio-frequency devices; and
4 verifying that the read radio-frequency identification code matches the
5 assigned radio-frequency identification code.

1 3. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising providing radio-
2 frequency shielding around at least the first station.

1 4. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising providing radio-
2 frequency shielding around the preparation device.

1 5. The method recited in claim 1 wherein:
2 receiving the plurality of such radio-frequency devices comprises receiving
3 each such device in an enclosure; and
4 encoding the radio-frequency identification code is performed without
5 removing the each of the radio-frequency devices from the enclosure.

1 6. The method recited in claim 5 wherein the package is the enclosure.

1 7. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising encapsulating the
2 each of the radio-frequency devices in material to produce a structure of a standard size,

3 wherein the preparation device is adapted to move objects of the standard size to the plurality
4 of stations.

1 8. The method recited in claim 7 wherein encapsulating the each of the
2 radio-frequency devices comprises heat shrink wrapping the each of the radio-frequency
3 devices.

1 9. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising affixing the each of
2 the radio-frequency devices to a backboard having a standard size, wherein the preparation
3 device is adapted to move objects of the standard size to the plurality of stations.

1 10. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising inserting the each of
2 the radio-frequency devices into an envelope for mailing to the recipient.

1 11. The method recited in claim 1 wherein receiving the plurality of such
2 radio-frequency devices comprises receiving a reel that includes the plurality of such radio-
3 frequency devices.

1 12. The method recited in claim 11 further comprising cutting the reel
2 between radio-frequency devices to separate the radio-frequency devices.

1 13. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising:
2 receiving a plurality of magnetic-stripe cards;
3 reading, at a third station, an identification of each of the plurality of
4 magnetic-stripe cards from a magnetic stripe comprised by the magnetic-stripe card; and
5 determining the radio-frequency identification code to be assigned to a
6 corresponding one of the radio-frequency devices from the identification of the each of the
7 plurality of magnetic-stripe cards,
8 wherein the package further contains the magnetic-stripe card corresponding
9 to the each of the radio-frequency devices.

1 14. The method recited in claim 13 further comprising encapsulating the
2 each of the radio-frequency devices in material to produce a structure of a standard size,
3 wherein the preparation device is adapted to move objects of the standard size to the plurality
4 of stations.

1 15. The method recited in claim 14 wherein the standard size is
2 approximately equal to a size of the magnetic-stripe cards.

1 16. A method for automated preparation of radio-frequency devices for
2 distribution, the method comprising:

3 receiving a plurality of such radio-frequency devices, each such device
4 comprising an embedded radio-frequency transponder;

5 encapsulating each of the radio-frequency devices in material to produce a
6 structure of a standard size; and

7 encoding a radio-frequency identification code assigned to the each of the
8 radio-frequency devices through the encapsulating material.

1 17. The method recited in claim 16 further comprising:

2 reading the radio-frequency identification code from the each of the radio-
3 frequency devices; and

4 verifying that the read radio-frequency identification code from the each of the
5 radio-frequency devices matches the assigned radio-frequency identification code.

1 18. The method recited in claim 16 wherein encapsulating the each of the
2 radio-frequency devices comprises heat shrink wrapping the each of the radio-frequency
3 devices.

1 19. The method recited in claim 16 further comprising inserting the each
2 of the encoded radio-frequency devices into a package labeled with an address of a recipient
3 of the encoded radio-frequency devices.

1 20. A method for automated preparation of radio-frequency devices for
2 distribution, the method comprising:

3 receiving a plurality of such radio-frequency devices, each such device
4 comprising an embedded radio-frequency transponder;

5 affixing the each of the radio-frequency devices to a backboard having a
6 standard size; and

7 encoding a radio-frequency identification code assigned to the each of the
8 radio-frequency devices as the backboard is moved sequentially to a plurality of stations of a
9 preparation device.

1 21. The method recited in claim 20 further comprising:
2 reading the radio-frequency identification code from the each of the radio-
3 frequency devices; and
4 verifying that the read radio-frequency identification code from the each of the
5 radio-frequency devices matches the assigned radio-frequency identification code.

1 22. The method recited in claim 20 further comprising inserting the each
2 of the encoded radio-frequency devices into a package labeled with an address of a recipient
3 of the encoded radio-frequency devices.

1 23. A method for automated preparation of radio-frequency devices for
2 distribution, the method comprising:
3 receiving a plurality of such radio-frequency devices, each such device
4 comprising an embedded radio-frequency transponder;
5 receiving a plurality of magnetic-stripe cards, each such magnetic stripe card
6 having a magnetic-stripe identification encoded thereon;
7 sequentially moving pairs of the radio-frequency devices and magnetic-stripe
8 cards to a plurality of stations of a preparation device;
9 encoding the radio-frequency device of each such pair with a radio-frequency
10 identification code corresponding to the magnetic-stripe identification of the magnetic-stripe
11 card of the each such pair at one or more of the stations; and
12 preparing the each such pair for mailing to a recipient at another of the
13 stations.

1 24. The method recited in claim 23 further comprising:
2 reading the radio-frequency identification code from the radio-frequency
3 device of the each such pair at a further station; and
4 verifying that the radio-frequency identification code corresponds to the
5 magnetic-stripe identification of the magnetic-stripe card of the each such pair.

1 25. The method recited in claim 23 wherein preparing the each such pair
2 for mailing comprises inserting the each such pair into an envelope addressed to the recipient.

1 26. A method for automated preparation of radio-frequency devices for
2 distribution, the method comprising:

3 receiving a plurality of enclosures each holding a radio-frequency device, each
4 such device comprising an embedded radio-frequency transponder;
5 sequentially moving each of the enclosures to a plurality of stations of a
6 preparation device;
7 encoding, at a first station, a radio-frequency identification code assigned to
8 the each of the radio-frequency devices without removing the each of the radio-frequency
9 devices from its enclosure;
10 identifying a recipient for the each of the radio-frequency devices; and
11 labeling, at a second station, the enclosure of the each of the radio-frequency
12 devices with an address for the recipient.

1 27. The method recited in claim 26 further comprising:
2 reading, at a third station, the radio-frequency identification code from the
3 each of the radio-frequency devices; and
4 verifying that the read radio-frequency identification code matches the
5 assigned radio-frequency identification code.

1 28. The method recited in claim 26 wherein each of the enclosures is a
2 standard size.